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ABSTRACT

Proposed is an educational philosophy to address the changing world condition in which space and resources are shrinking and the fact of a whole world community is becoming more influential. The proposed philosophy, "Whole Earth Education," is discussed as being an appropriate learning environment, a commitment to the pursuit of "wholeness" in the participants, and a view of the earth that is holistic. The purpose of the paper is to propose an educational philosophy; it does not detail organization and implementation, but rather discusses the theory of the philosophy. (RE)

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Occasional Paper #1

A Future Look at Environmental Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Judy DuShane
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Office of Environmental Education
Ohio Department of Education
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WHOLE EARTH EDUCATION: A TRIAL EXPLANATION

Through the years many people have toiled to become "educated persons." Wise people have tried to define what that means and have designed educational programs for others that were guaranteed to accomplish this goal. General education, liberal education, great books education and others have all tried to get the job done. These movements were perhaps well conceived but sometimes when translated into practical programs they turned into efforts to "train the mind" or "fill up the reservoir with knowledge" while paying little attention to the wholeness of the person, the civilization, the culture, and their interrelationships in the world in general.

Whole Earth Education is a unique learning process blending together the twin ideas of whole people and whole earth. It is a strong but slowly emerging movement in education. Dealing with people and the earth on a piecemeal basis should no longer be tolerated. All aspects of this complex planet are unavoidably interrelated and must be valued, viewed and understood as a whole.

Whole Earth Education emphasizes the education of the whole person--a commitment to the idea that the physical, moral, spiritual, ethical, social, intellectual, and emotional development must proceed at the same time. We know relatively little about how this can be done effectively, but news of individuals and small groups who are trying to find the pieces to the puzzle keep appearing in newsletters, articles, and books.

Whole Earth Education has come into being simply because the traditional piece by piece, specialization by specialization, band-aid by band-aid approach cannot provide a complete education for a citizen of the world. Because people

of the world are tied together in so many ways, what is needed today is a greater understanding of the ways our lives, decisions, and aspirations are tied to the lives, decisions and aspirations of other earthlings. True world brotherhood (more recently peoplehood) has been sought for centuries. But only now, as the planet's space and resources shrink and as communications and interactions among humans increase, are we forced to learn how to deal with the real meaning of a whole world community.

To adequately meet this recently recognized condition a new term is born. Whole Earth Education is *a learning process which requires an appropriate learning environment, a commitment to the pursuit of wholeness in the participants, and a view of the earth that is holistic.* Only when an educational program skillfully blends the twin ideas of the whole person and the whole earth can we expect the outcome to be an "educated person."

At this point it should be noted that the purpose of this paper is to propose an educational philosophy, not to detail its organization and implementation. Specific activities with necessary descriptions of the appropriate learning environment and process components will be generated from proponents and practitioners as the idea gains acceptance. The following sections, therefore, further explain the theory of Whole Earth Education.

THE TWIN IDEAS

Whole Earth

In order to describe or define a term it is often necessary to dissect the idea. Fractioning and reducing terms is just the opposite of what Whole Earth Education is all about: learning the whole earth back together again. But to get a picture of what constitutes the whole earth, let's talk about

some different ways of taking it apart.

One dissection might be to think in terms of living and non-living, but then there is the problem of what to do with dead or once living things. Another selection of categories might include natural, human altered and human built, but an argument would soon point out that in the most remote wilderness or the farthest reaches of the atmosphere you can find evidence of the human influence--thus, there is no "natural" category. The problem here is that these categories have a thing orientation--they are nouns. What about processes?

Processes, actions, interactions must be the heart of Whole Earth Education. Categories--let's see, biological and physical? No, too narrow. They leave out all of the processes produced by the human mind--the creative and social processes: government, management, economic, scientific, technological, aesthetic and others. These categories have a verb or action orientation and must be a part of Whole Earth Education.

The word "interrelationships" (between environmental parts) has been used extensively in the literature. Perhaps another word should also be used--"interactions"--which gives an action flavor to the idea rather than merely a static relationship. Or even--"interactive relationships". Whole Earth Education, then, concerns not only the things in the environment--nouns--but also the processes, actions and interactions--verbs.

Whole People

Looking at human beings we can apply a similar ecological principal--most things are interactive. Development, for example, of intellectual, physical or emotional facets of people usually does not proceed divorced from one another or from other components of a whole person. Breakdowns in one part

of the system influences the functioning of the total being. Perhaps many of our failures in education are the result of ignoring the notion that the human organism functions best as a whole being.

We study Piaget or Kohlberg or Erikson to understand the stages through which our students pass. We encourage valuing exercises, body movement activities or human relations skills but rarely consider how they fit together. Feelings, attitudes, self-concept, intellectual power, ethical beliefs, physical condition, and spiritual beliefs are also interactive, as is the whole earth. Each one influences the learning process either positively or negatively. When this view of the learning process is fully understood by the learning facilitator, a whole new way of helping the learner learn emerges.

To enable Whole Earth Education to take place with learners we need whole people as educators. We need warm, caring, empathetic, growing and self-actualizing persons who are willing to take risks. Perhaps some will recognize these ideas under other labels--humanistic education, learner-centered or personalized education and others. By whatever name, the all-pervading idea is the recognition and development of the whole person. Embracing Whole Earth Education requires a person to fully accept the total integration of the concepts of Whole Earth and Whole People.

Along with the acceptance of the idea, a person needs to act upon it in both his professional and personal life.

WHOLE EARTH EDUCATION CHARACTERISTICS

Now that we have explored the Whole Earth Education concept, certain characteristics can be described. These characteristics might be considered

as attributes or qualities of a Whole Earth Education experience.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment for Whole Earth Education must be humanistic. The use of varied learning locales is essential. Whole people would be helping learners become whole people through diverse learning experiences. The interaction between teacher and learner would focus on learner needs and learner relevant activities. Varied teaching strategies would also be used to motivate learners for personally meaningful experiences. Diversity in people, activities, environmental stimuli, and the interactions among all these factors must be recognized and used.

The Learning Process

Learning facilitators encourage learner growth in "whole person" development (emotional, intellectual, ethical) keeping in mind helpful components of theories of such authorities as Erikson, Piaget, Bloom, Kohlberg, and Samples. The learning process is holistic, experiential, and involves value fair presentations and valuing activities while enhancing creativity. Emphasis is on issue resolution and problem-solving with attention paid to attitudinal differences, human relations and conflict resolution. The learning activities focus on a positive, global and a mostly futuristic orientation. The entire process of educating for whole personhood would be fused with a whole earth view.

AREAS OF GROWTH IN THE LEARNER

Whole Earth Education as described in previous sections benefits the learner in several ways regardless of whether the learner's group is young

or old, in school or out, big or small. The important idea is that the process is holistic. The following are the areas of growth for the learner during that process.

Personal Development

When leaders or facilitators arrange learning situations as described earlier, the outcome for the learner is movement toward wholeness. A more positive self-concept, more flexibility, more self-reliance and a sense of self-fulfillment--all are personal benefits that accrue to the learner. The moral, spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and ethical "parts" are more interactive, more integrated, which then give a much greater overall strength to the whole person than the sum of the strengths of each part.

Learning and Living Skills

Learning and living are processes that go on our entire lives. In very early times the learning and living skills were few and mostly related to the basic needs of food, shelter and clothing. In these times learning and living skills are many and some are complex. Participation in Whole Earth Education activities provides the opportunity to add to and improve these skills in a non-threatening atmosphere. These skills then provide security to the person as she or he meets and copes with the fast-paced change of modern society.

The list of learning skills is long and there are many ways to group them. Categories of learning skills are presented below for your consideration. These include skills for:

1. participating in learning groups
2. participating in social groups
3. participating in family groups
4. participating in work groups
5. creative expression

6. solitary and shared self-renewal
7. obtaining information
8. organizing information
9. using information
10. communicating information
11. evaluating information

The many living and learning skills that fall into these 11 categories can be developed using almost any theme or topic. The most productive themes or topics are those that are relevant to the learner.

If you are oriented to formal disciplines, you may be concerned because you do not see math skills or science skills as category headings. Those skills would appear as a part of each category. If they were included, the skills list would number in the hundreds or thousands. Skills from each discipline may more properly be termed tools as they are used as the means to an end.

Formation and/or Change of Attitudes

Whole Earth Education is not in the business of behavior modification or pontification. The process is open, democratic and value fair. Each person brings a set of values that have developed over many years and these values should be recognized and honored. The learning and interaction in the group are expected to produce changes of many kinds, including changes in values and attitudes which hopefully will produce changes in behavior. These changes may be almost imperceptible or they may be dramatic. They may also be unpredictable in their direction. A major accomplishment with some learners is just getting them to examine their attitudes and values and begin talking about them. It may take months or years of Whole Earth Education to begin to turn around negative attitudes that have become ingrained because of years of traditional autocratic living and learning.

Attitudes and values contribute to the formation of an ethic. One aim of Whole Earth Education is to enable people to develop a global ethic which is a deep concern for the integrity of the world's environment and its people. This ethic provides a framework for an ecologically sound and humanely balanced life.

Knowledge

This category of benefits for learners is intentionally last in the list for several reasons. First, it is last just because it is almost always first: just like the boy with a last name of Adam, Appleby, Abrams or Astrowski who must always sit in the front row or gets called on first. Knowledge or content just doesn't deserve to take precedence over skills, attitudes and personal development, but rather should receive more equal emphasis.

Second, knowledge is changing and huge amounts are generated every day. There is little hope of learning even a small portion of it. The skills of obtaining, organizing, using, communicating and evaluating information are ten times, perhaps hundreds of times more important to a learner. If the learning skills are mastered, at any time in a person's life she/he will be able to cope with the problem of newly needed knowledge.

The standard argument for spending large amounts of time on acquiring knowledge is that the more you know the better you will be able to "cope with" or "do" your job whether it be in teaching, researching, banking, or garbage collection. This may only be true when personal fulfillment, learning and living skills, a positive attitude, and motivation are also possessed. Knowledge for its own sake is rarely valuable.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE IDEA

Creative people have contributed new ideas or new ways of combining old ideas for centuries. Each effort adds to the reservoir of knowledge and skills. Whole Earth Education could not have been created without the work of many hundreds of people throughout centuries of time. To mention all the great philosophers and educators and their contribution to this present educational movement is not in the scope of this short paper. The intent here is to mention a few people who contributed to the present idea. Some are known to the authors through their writings or disciples and some have directly influenced the formation of this idea in the minds of the authors. It should be understood, once again, that the twin ideas of whole people and whole earth are inseparable and the contributors mentioned have influenced both. They are, however, treated separately for ease of understanding.

Whole Earth

Since early times a few voices have been raised in defense of the earth or wilderness or nature. Famous names, such as John Muir, John Burroughs, Theodore Roosevelt, Giford Pinchot and more recently Aldo Leopold in the 1920's readily come to mind. Two books, Aldo Leopold's Sand County Almanac (1949) and Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962), and some spectacular environmental disasters like the Santa Barbara oil spill (1969), crystallized the notion that Americans may indeed make their environment an unhealthy place in which to live.

Clean it up! Clean it up! echoed down the halls of schools, industry and the U.S. Congress. And so the cleanup began. Litter pickers in the schools, air pollution regulations, water pollution regulations and the cleanup

bandwagon began to roll. No sooner had it begun than some people discovered that cleaning it up was only a treatment of the symptoms. The cause was not clear and ways of prevention were muddled.

Soon it was clear to some that all aspects of our daily lives were interrelated. Adlai Stevenson's "Spaceship Earth" speech in 1965 further spread the idea of the whole earth. Some people were beginning to see the interactive relationships between earthlings and the economic, political, industrial, technological, ethical, artistic, legal, and governmental systems which they had created. Truly, everything and everybody are interdependent with everything and everybody else on a worldwide basis.

The educational community responded to all this by first advocating more science, more social science, and more math, and all done more vigorously. Some shift from memorizing to involvement and problem solving and understanding was also instituted. But students still did not have the opportunity to learn how it all fit together: they were given only some pieces of the puzzle.

A more recent educational response had been to infuse environmental concepts into science, social science and other disciplines. The effort is a short-term one at best because it does not address the wholeness--the totalness of the world. The long-term effort, the full potential of the idea of wholeness can come only when the educational community finally recognizes the viability of Whole Earth Education. Subject disciplines are important and their principles are required to understand the whole. However, disciplines must not be studied as unrelated pieces the learner is expected to use at some future time to put the puzzle of the whole earth together. The process of understanding and coping with the wholeness of the earth should begin at birth and continue for all of life.

When the facilitator or educator and the learner are moving toward the whole person idea themselves, Whole Earth Education becomes the ultimate educational experience. Indeed, living and learning become one.

Whole People

Forerunners of today's humanistic educators include Socrates, Plato, Rabelais and Montaigne, all of whom in some way emphasized self-knowledge or liberal education.[10] John Dewey in Experience and Education proposed a person and society centered educational philosophy with an experiential base. Carl Rogers,[13,14] David Aspy[1] and Art Combs[3,4] are contemporary humanists who elaborate on humanistic or person-centered education.

Humanistic educators say that facilitators of learning need to be: (1) congruent, real or genuine, that is dropping facades, being comfortable as oneself, communicating and being unafraid to show the real self to the learners; (2) empathetic or understanding, that is relating with feelings as well as verbal behavior; and (3) caring or possessing positive regard, that is acceptance and trust in the learner.[14] Real, caring, empathetic teachers with high positive regard for learners can teach effectively many of the competencies for which communities are increasingly demanding accountability.[1]

The purpose of education must include helping learners become humane, self-actualizing, fully functioning people.[4] What is needed according to Carl Rogers[12] is a learning of a unified sort. He explains this as bringing together emotional and intellectual learning with a kind of visceral experiential learning.

Bob Samples[16] indicates the need for whole person development. Howard Kirschenbaum[7] describes these components of humanistic education: learner choice or control; emphasis on felt concerns; whole person education with life skills as basics; self-evaluation; and teacher as facilitator. Carl Rogers[13] defines person-centered education as based on an essential trust in others which includes a sharing of responsibility for the learning process; diverse resources, cooperative learning program development and a facilitative learning

climate. These pioneers of whole people education all have made substantial contributions to the developing awareness that the educational process must be humanistic or face a continuing decline in its credibility.

THE EDUCATION OF THE FUTURE

Signs of the Trend

William B. Stapp and Dorothy Cox[19] have been elaborating on the Spaceship Earth Philosophy which begins to build a Whole Earth Education base. Many Whole Earth Education ideas have been included in the "Principles of Environmental Education Programmes" developed by UNESCO-UNEP at worldwide regional conferences.[20] The National Humanistic Education Center includes environment as one special focus for 1978 along with its regular whole person emphasis. Global Education Associates in East Orange, N. J., advocates peace, justice, and human values education with an environmental flavor.

Art Combs[3] lists five reasons humanistic education is now an absolute essential: (1) basic changes in human problems requiring responsible, caring persons able to pull their full share; (2) the future is unforseen--thus, goals must be holistic and human; (3) new concepts of human personality, concerning internal processes as well as behaviors; (4) new concepts in learning based on experiential, personally meaningful education; and (5) the importance of self-concept in any human interaction. Harold Shane[18] reviewed the "Seven Cardinal Principles of Education" of 1918 with a group of world citizens and young people and included such items as: improving intercultural and interpersonal attitudes, adding human relations and communication skills, stronger affinity-group relationships, development of world citizenship attitudes, and personal self-fulfillment. In addition, they suggest broader more varied learning opportunities

and a learner-centered problem-solving approach.

And Tomorrow the World!

Whole Earth Education enables people to behave as world citizens functioning fully in their own realm while considering the ramifications of their actions in a global framework. The person comes to a balance among caring about himself, caring about others and caring about the world. As the Whole Earth Education idea spreads and grows, our significant roles as interdependent passengers on our fragile spaceship earth will be further refined. The acceptance of Whole Earth Education by a critical mass of people will most surely lead to the emergence of new patterns of learning and living.

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From part-time substitute jobs in both public and parochial schools, to high school human ecology teacher in Toledo, to university research associate and lecturer at Bowling Green's Environmental Studies Center, to my present position as educational consultant at Lucas County Schools, the people and experiences that have encouraged my growth are too numerous to mention. Serving on curriculum committees, editing a newsletter, "EcoCentric", coordinating a Cooperative Environmental Education Center and interacting with many superb educators in classes and informally helped form my thoughts.

Such exciting and rewarding experiences as an NSF field biology and ecology course in Sonoma State University in California, a Hurricane Island Relations Wilderness Lab at the National Humanistic Education Center, and an Institute for Peace, Justice and Human Values have helped shape my values. The patient help of professors, colleagues and friends have aided in thought processes, personal development and improvement of my writing style.

From my deep love of Lake Erie and a family homestead at Kelleys Island, Ohio, through an ever-growing realization of the beauty of individual people, comes the need for integration of the love of people and environment in some kind of intertwined form. Thus, my enthusiasm for Whole Earth Education.

Judy DuShane
Toledo, Ohio

Working on this Whole Earth Education idea not only brought me in contact with some really neat people over the last few months but allowed me to think back to people and happenings from over the years. My undergraduate days at Iowa State University and later graduate work at Indiana University and Michigan State University led to the realization that cooperative learning was going to be my bag.

Teaching in a resident outdoor education center at Battle Creek, Michigan was the first of a series of opportunities to learn the trade by doing it and by having the counsel of some very whole people. Elementary and junior high school classroom teaching and university teaching opportunities in places like Oregon, Illinois, Grove City, Ohio, Northern Illinois University, Antioch College, and Pennsylvania State University gave me more valuable insights into the educational process.

Some of these experiences also gave me the opportunity of trying to cope with administrative responsibilities. Working with state and national organizations helped the development of the skills of organization and idea synthesis. Now in my position as Environmental Education Consultant with the Ohio Department of Education all of these skills are useful.

I feel confident that many more really neat people will come into my life and that opportunities for further growth will come faster than I can assimilate them.

John Hug
Columbus, Ohio

AND FRIENDS

Judy DuShane and John Hug could not have written this paper without the known and unknown help of all the educators and friends and others who have recently or in the past crossed our paths personally or by the written word. Each of these people have contributed to the essence of these pages.

There are a group of 12 people to whom we are more recently indebted. Six joined us in January 1977 for a two-day session to explore the idea of interdisciplinary environmental education. Six additional educators were invited to a second session in May 1977 to discuss the idea of nondisciplinary environmental education. From that session emerged another concept--the idea of Whole Earth Education. After a ten-month incubation period we were moved to put it in this trial form.

These are the seminar attendees:

Miss Susan Beede
Consumer Education Resources Center
Columbiana County JVSD

Nancy Miller
Environmental Studies Center
Bowling Green State University

Jim Dunlap
Formerly of Whitmer High School
Toledo, Ohio

Tim Kreps
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Beth DeMerit
Donnell Junior High School
Findlay, Ohio

Christy Dixon
Elementary Education Department
Springfield City Schools

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

This is the first in a series of papers designed to provide interested people with some current information about Environmental Education. The occasional paper format was chosen because it provides for rapid production and therefore timeliness. The short length of these papers will allow them to be distributed to different and specific audiences, thereby reducing the possibility of unused or wasted copies. Other topics now being considered for publication are:

Solar Energy Teaching Unit: Middle School

An Explanation of Appropriate Technology

Using an Environmental Problem Solving Simulation in the Classroom

Descriptions of Environmental Education Experiences

Responsibilities of a School District Coordinator of Environmental Education

Suggestions for other topics will be welcome.

Authors for these papers will be Ohioans both in and out of the Ohio Department of Education and therefore, the views expressed are those of the authors. The Ohio Department of Education only wishes to provide educators some food for thought by reproducing them for you.